

Remarks/Arguments:

This Request for Continued Examination was filed in response to the Unentered Amendment filed January 3, 2005 which was filed in response to the Final Office Action mailed November 4, 2004. The applicants also wish to thank Examiner Bui for the courtesy extended to the below-named representative in a telephone interview on March 8, 2005. During that interview, the differences between the present invention and that which is disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 5,702,418 to Ravenscroft were discussed. Agreement was reached that differences exist, and this RCE was filed along with its associated claim amendments to more clearly define the present invention so as to further distinguish it from the cited reference. Discussion of the amendments and the differences is presented below.

As a preliminary matter, it is noted that the Advisory Action of January 13, 2005 indicated that claims 21-23, and 25-27 were pending. Claim 24, however, was also still pending as its cancellation was not entered with the amendment submitted January 3, 2005. Moreover, however, it is in any event now cancelled in this Amendment. Claims 21-23, and 25-27 are therefore pending. Claims 6-9 and 28-40 remain withdrawn.

Discussion of Amendment

Claim 21 was amended to recite that that the catheter has an inner shaft "with a ring disposed on the inner shaft, the ring having discontinuous protrusions at different circumferential positions" and that the stent which is mounted around the inner shaft has "open areas through which pass the discontinuous protrusions of the ring" This aspect of the present invention is shown throughout the specification, most notably perhaps at page 29 along with Figs. 17B and 18.

Specifically, page 29 of the specification discusses the discontinuous protrusions at different circumferential positions:

The mounting ring 334 has at least one radial member or ridge 336, which projects radially out from the inner ring 338 towards the outer sheath 300. In a preferred embodiment, the ring 334 has a pair of ridges 336 which project radially outward in opposite directions along a common axis, or in other words, at an angular separation of 180 degrees. Additional ridges 336 that can be evenly spaced around the circumference of the ring 334 to evenly distribute the load force on the stent and can extend longitudinally between 1 and 8 mm such that the proximal loops at one end of the stent grasp the ridges during mounting. The stent is then held in place by the outer sheath during delivery and release *Cells of the stent 10 are placed around the protrusions 336.* With the

strands 42 of the stent 10 encircling the tabs 336, the stent 10 can compress while still being retained.

(emphasis added). Moreover, no new matter has been added.

The protrusions which extend radially outward from the base part of the ring allow for reliable stent retention within the device. This is due to the fact that the protrusions extend through the open areas of the stent and thereby prevent longitudinal movement of the stent as the outer sheath is moved with respect to the stent and the inner shaft, as seen clearly in Figs. 17B and 18.

Discussion of Prior Art

It is noteworthy that the cited art (Ravenscroft) was specifically addressed in the original specification and deliberately called out as different. Note page 29, beginning at line 28, where it states:

An alternative [*i.e.*, different] method uses a *solid* mounting ring where the stent is held with a *friction fit* between the outer sheath and the ring to retain the stent in position in the delivery system. The *solid* ring with the friction fit is further described in U.S. Patent No. 5,702,418 [Ravenscroft]. . . the entire contents of which is [sic] incorporated herewith [sic] by reference.

(emphasis added).

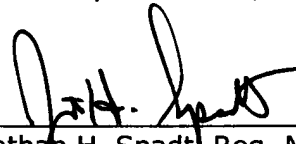
The "solid" ring referred to and disclosed in the reference is just that, a donut-shaped ring with a constant diameter along all points of its outer surface or circumference. This is in complete contradistinction to that which is clearly called out in the present claims where the ring has "discontinuous protrusions at different circumferential positions"

The present claims are directed to a method whereby the stent is mounted around the protrusions of the ring. This step is simply not taught or suggested by any known prior art, particularly Ravenscroft.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons set forth above in light of the claim amendments made herein, the applicants respectfully request a notice of allowance. If any further discussion is seen by the Examiner as potentially helpful, he is encouraged to contact the below named signatory for further discussion.

Respectfully submitted,



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